

The William Scott Mansion House  
Powerville, Boonton Township  
Morris County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS  
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA  
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Seymour Williams, F.A.I.A., District Officer  
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The William Scott Mansion House  
Powerville, Boonton Township  
Morris County, New Jersey

Owner: The Equitable Life Assurance Society of  
America

Date of Erection: 1800-1815

Architect:

Builder: William Scott (1785-1838)

Present Condition: Original, well maintained by  
the owner as guest house for  
the company's employees.  
Modern wing at one end.

Number of Stories: Two, with basement and garret

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone  
masonry

Exterior walls - timber  
frame with clapboard  
siding

Interior walls - lath  
and plaster on studding

Chimneys - brick built  
into inside of gable  
end walls

Roof - gambrel, wood  
shingled and with  
dormers

Historical Data:

By a deed of 13 January 1787 Adam De Mouth  
of Pequannock Township conveyed to Joseph Scott of

the same place for 217 pounds, money of the State of New Jersey, two adjacent lots of 80 and 14 3/4 acres in Hanover Township (now Boonton) the former lot having its north and east frontage on the horse-shoe bend of Rockaway River. Recital is made of grantor's title from Abraham Van Winkle of Hanover Township in the same county by sheriff's deed of 15 August 1770, conveying some ninety acres. On this tract the house here considered was built about 1815.

Joseph Scott, the grantee abovesaid had come to this neighborhood in 1774 from Ireland and died here on 5 December 1827 aged 75-2-19 as inscribed on the gravestone in the family burial ground on this estate (1) near Powerville, a mile above the village of Boonton. He erected a forge and grist mill there on Rockaway River early in the 19th century. "After his death, his son William Scott became sole owner. He was an active, enterprising man and sought to make improvements. He was successful in accumulating property and became owner of large tracts of land, among them being the Hibernia tract with its valuable iron mines from which he obtained his supply of ore for his forge. He introduced at Powerville a method of separating the pure part of iron ore from the dross by first crushing it and then passing it over magnetic rollers. William Scott died at about the time anthracite was displacing charcoal in converting pig into wrought iron.....At the death of William Scott his son Elijah D. Scott succeeded to the ownership of the forge and grist mill..... When the canal was constructed at Boonton, the company in the early part of August 1829 obtained from William Scott a deed for such land as was required and for the privilege of damming the river above the falls so that the canal might be fed. In return, the canal company granted to Scott

(1) Inscriptions from Scott Family Plot, Powerville.  
See the Genealogical Mag. of N.J., vol. 7

and his heirs the privilege of using the canal as a raceway for conveying water to the mills from the dam. Scott thus obtained an abundant water power." (2)

Rosia Scott, the widow of Joseph Scott abovenamed, gave a release of her dower rights in his estate on 14 March 1828 to his sons John, William, Joseph, and Milton Scott, in which deed the two tracts purchased by him from Adam De Mouth as abovesaid are cited, as also are two acquired later and by which the total acreage had become 100 at the time of his death, describing this property as "the homestead farm of the said Joseph Scott." In the subsequent division of this estate among these four brothers, three of them conveyed to the fourth, William Scott, all being of Hanover Township, by their deed of 1st April 1829, fifty acres thereof describing it as fronting eastward on Rockaway River and as bounded north by the canal and south by the original property line between Joseph Scott and Abraham Van Winkle's house lots. The house here considered was evidently erected about 1815 by the son William Scott, then thirty years of age, and upon the part of his father, Joseph Scott's estate thus confirmed to him some sixteen months after the latter's death.

William Scott, the builder of this house as abovesaid, died there intestate on 26 July 1838, aged 53-5-14, having married firstly Susan Dodd and secondly Susannah Munn. Evidently, his success in the iron business and in acquiring property as described in the quoted account above provided the means for building the imposing house here surveyed. In a division of his real estate among his heirs, lot no. 11 of some 140 acres was assigned to his son Elijah D. Scott. This tract is described in the record as being "at Powerville, on which the Mansion House of the late William Scott deceased, four dwelling houses, store and barns are

(2) A History of Morris County. The Lewis Historical Publ. Co., 2 Vols., 1914, vol. 1, pp. 266 and 268

situated on the west side of Rockaway River and three dwelling houses on the east side of the river and embracing the water power and privileges at Powerville, the forge and coal house as marked and designated on the map..... being in the township of Hanover and Pequannoc".

Elijah D. Scott who thus succeeded his father as the second owner and occupant of this house, died there without issue on 22 January 1847, aged 36-7-3 having devised to his wife Jane Elizabeth Scott by will all of the estate during her lifetime and afterward the same to his two sisters and their children and in default of such issue, to the children of a third sister, Augusta De Camp. The widow died 4 May 1849 in her 34th year, and accordingly the property came into possession of his three sisters. Of these, Eliza A. wife of Aaron Crane died on 5 November 1873 without issue, Susan A. died 18 April 1874 unmarried, and Augusta wife of Edward De Camp was deceased by 1866 leaving her seven children upon whom the estate accordingly devolved.

Having purchased the rights of the others in 1890-3, two of these seven heirs, Susan D. Schultze, widow, and Mary A. De Camp, unmarried, both of Boonton (and apparently residing in the house as the last of the descendants of William Scott to possess it) conveyed by deed of 28 April 1920 to The Equitable Life Assurance Society of America the same "William Scott Mansion House" on a lot of 5.73 acres, and that corporation is the present (1939) owner.

#### Architecture Analysis:

This fine example of the country mansion in upper New Jersey exhibits the post-Revolution culmination of this class of domestic architecture in the imposing mass created by increased height of stories on a long rectangular plan. The gambrel

roof traditional in this region from the earlier houses of Dutch settlers in Bergen County appears but somewhat revised, with a classic triglyphed frieze greatly elaborating the eaves, twin chimneys in the gable ends, with dormers introduced in the roof having pilaster and pediment treatment of arch headed windows. Two large windows symmetrical on either side of the glass side-lighted and transomed central entrance door, and five similar windows centered above on these features complete the formality of the long facade. The veranda across the front is of subsequent erection, and more modern is the two story wing at one gable end.

It is possible to deduce Joseph Scott (1752-1827) as the builder of this house circa 1815 rather than his son William Scott (1785-1838) but in that case he must have built also an earlier house on the estate in 1787 when he acquired this land, unless there was one on it at that date. In conveyances after the death of William Scott, however, it is called "The William Scott Mansion House" by his heirs in 1840 and again in 1920 as quoted hereinbefore. The weight of evidence is in favor of William Scott as the builder, probably with assistance from his father.

#### Bibliography:

A search of title in Morris County Land and Probate records by Cornelius Mc Phillips, H.A.B.S. abstractor

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